

OSCAR LEESER
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TOMMY GONZALEZ
CITY MANAGER



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March 4, 2015

NEWS RELEASE

Third Flu-Related Death in El Paso

Elderly man had underlying health conditions

EL PASO, Texas – The City of El Paso Department of Public Health announced today that an elderly man has become the third person to succumb to the influenza virus this season. Health officials say the man had underlying medical conditions. His death was reported last week.

"We extend our condolences to this man's family and friends, and remind the public that the influenza virus can be deadly. This is why we work diligently to prevent the spread of this disease during the flu season," said Fernando Gonzalez, Lead Epidemiologist.

Between February 22 and February 28 of this year, the Department of Public Health recorded 140 new cases of the flu in El Paso. The total number of flu cases this season is now at 5,379. This is compared to 3,620 cases at this time last year.

Health officials continue to recommend preventive measures to combat the disease. They include the "4 C's" which have proven to be effective in preventing the spread of the flu virus.

- 1. CLEAN** - Wash your hands often. Scrub your hands for at least 30 seconds with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- 2. COVER** - Cover your cough. Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Don't have a tissue? The crook of your elbow will do.
- 3. CONTAIN** - Contain germs by steering clear of others who are sick. If you do get sick, stay home until you're well again, so you don't spread more germs.
- 4. CALL** - Call or see your doctor if you or your child has a fever of greater than 100 degrees.

In addition to this advice, the Department's Immunization program is also offering flu vaccines to children ages six months to 18-years-old who are covered by Medicaid (ALL Texas Medicaid plans accepted), are underinsured, or do not have health insurance, and who meet eligibility requirements. The cost is \$10.00.

The Department stocks only a limited amount of adult vaccine and the cost is \$40.00. Clients are urged to contact the clinic of their choice to verify availability of both the children's and adult vaccines prior to their visit. Residents may also consult with their primary care provider or a local retail outlet of their choice in order to obtain the adult vaccine. For more information contact the appointments desk at (915) 212-6555.

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Promote Transparent and Consistent Communication Among All Members of the Community

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Education

In effort to increase awareness about influenza and ways the public can protect themselves, the Department of Public Health offers a flu educational session presented by the Speakers Bureau. Local civic and community organizations can schedule a presentation that will include background on the disease, prevention methods, as well as what people can look out for in regards to signs and symptoms of infection. Presentations can be scheduled by visiting www.EPHealth.com, and then clicking on the Speakers Bureau link under Special Projects.

These services support the City of El Paso's strategic goal to nurture and promote a healthy, sustainable community. For more information on the programs and services offered by the Department of Public Health, visit EPHealth.com or dial 2-1-1.

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